

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 18164 040655Z
ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 INR-05 AF-04 /031 W
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1177
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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STADIS////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT--PARA ONE)

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: ECRE, EG
SUBJ: NERSESIAN PROJECT FOR DIVERSION OF NILE WATERS TO SAUDI ARABIA

REF (A) STATE 254721, (B) KHARTOUM 3826

1. WE ARE NOT ABLE ASSESS TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY OF NERSESIAN PROJECT, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE IN ANY EVENT THAT EGYPTIANS WOULD REACT FAVORABLY TO IT. NILE RIVER IS SO MUCH A PART OF EGYPTIAN NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS THAT ANY SCHEME FOR DIVERTING EVEN A PART OF IT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE OPPOSED, BOTH BY GOE AND BY POULAR OPINION.

2. PRESENT AVAILABILITY OF WATER FROM RIVER EXCEEDS EGYPT'S NEEDS FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES IN AREA (3 TO 5 PERCENT OF COUNTRY'S LAND SURFACE) NOW UNDER CULTIVATION AND NEEDS COULD BE REDUCED BY SWITCH TO SPRINKLER OR DRIP IRRIGATION. HOWEVER, WITH NARROW NILE VALLEY ENCLOSED BY DESERT, POPULAR VIEW IS THAT EGYPT IS COUNTRY LACKING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN WATER RESOURCES, NOT ONE WITH WATER TO SPARE. GOE, MOREOVER, HAS AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR USING ADDITIONAL WATER IN EXPANSION OF CULTIVATED AREA - THROUGH LAND RECLAMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONS SUCH AS NEW VALLEY IN WESTERN DESEET - TO SERVE POPULATION INCREASING BY ONE MILLION PERSONS EACH YEAR.

3. WITH SPECIFIC RESPECT TO SAUDI ARABIA, WE THINK EGYPTIANS WOULD

FIND IT DIFFICULT UNDERSTAND WHY COUNTRY WITH WORLD'S GREATEST
OIL RESOURCES SHOULD ALSO BE ENDOWED, BY GRACE OF EGYPT, WITH
NILE WATER. HOWEVER, GOE IS BEHOLDEN TO SAG FOR FINANCIAL HELP
AND IF SCHEME WERE STRONGLY PRESSED BY KING KHALID, FADH OR OTHER
SENIOR SAUDI OFFICIALS ON SADAT, LATTER MIGHT RELUCTANTLY HAVE TO
ACQUIESCE. HE WOULD NOT DO SO WITHOUT A FIGHT, HOWEVER.
EILTS

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Message Attributes

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